

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Southern Alberta

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The Calgary Film Exchange – Hollywood's Northern Outpost



Palace Theatre, 8th Avenue West, Calgary, mid-1920s. It has many Jewish connections—the Calgary-based Allen theatre chain built the Palace in 1921 and J.B. Barron operated the theatre between 1923 and 1928. The 2000-seat theatre is now being restored. *Photo – Robert Barron, Glenbow Archives, NA 1178-2.*

By Stanley H. Winfield

In the '30s and '40s films for all movie theatres in Canada were distributed through "film exchanges." The Calgary Film Exchange, a two-storey brick building at the corner of 8th Avenue and 6th Street West, was the distribution centre for every theatre between Kindersley, Saskatchewan, and Nelson, British Columbia.

Of the eight film companies that occupied the building, four had Jewish branch managers: Universal Pictures, Columbia Pictures, Warner

Brothers and United Artists. Paramount, 20th Century Fox and RKO employed no Jews, and MGM had two Jewish employees.

I worked at Universal Pictures from June 1940 until December 1941. My recollections depend on my memory, reinforced and corrected by Sid Pearlman of Calgary. I have forgotten many of the names of those with whom I worked, and I looked to Sid for additional recollections. The period covered are those eighteen months in 1940 and 1941

during which I was the "shipper and ad sales manager" at Universal. A callow seventeen year old when I started, I was the youngest employee in the building and generally referred to as "the kid".

The war was on, and most of us enlisted, and some didn't survive, like Charles "Chuck" Green, a giant of a fellow both in height and gentleness. Chuck was the shipper at United Artist, and one of the first to volunteer for active service. His colleague, Alex Goldenberg, was the booker at United Artists and the manager was Abe Feinstein.

An interesting aspect of United Artists was its status at the Exchange. Film exchange staff shared whatever prestige and success their parent company enjoyed in Hollywood. For instance, United Artists, then owned by Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford, was the only "independent" company of the time and therefore, the United Artists staff had a lofty, arty standing that distinguished them from the

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Calgary Film Exchange ...

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rest of us whose parent studios were more commercial.

In this regard, Universal was pretty well at the bottom of this perceived hierarchy. Even though W.C. Fields, Marlene Dietrich and Deanna Durbin were Universal's "stars", we also distributed low budget cowboy pictures from Republic, and "B" movies from Monogram.

Wolfe Blankstein, a tall, handsome man with a somewhat gruff manner (in fact a very kind and generous fellow), was Universal's manager. Martha Block, a raven-haired beauty, just out of high school, came to our office as a secretary in 1941 about the same time that I reached my eighteenth birthday and enlisted in the RCAF. (Martha Block married Harry Cohen in 1945; he had left Warner Brothers in 1943. He later ran the Plaza and Crescent theatres, and sold them to Sam Slutker.)

Warner Brothers had the largest complement of Jews—at the front end were branch manager Harry Cohen, and booker Max "Mackie" Belkin. The shipper was Sam Shnitka (whose father Ben, was shipper at MGM), Sam Hapton was the ad sales manager, and Norman Martin was revisor.

Jack Cohen, tall, slim and elegant like his brother Harry, was sales manager at Columbia Pictures; the manager was Harvey Harnick and the shipper Sid Pearlman, my distinguished research assistant, who was the Exchange's "good humour man" because nothing ever seemed to get him down. My best friends were Sam Shnitka and Cyril "Cy" Davies, the shipper at 20th Century Fox. Cy was a Welshman and his accent hardly went with the Yiddish expressions he frequently used.

Sam Hapton and I served together in the RCAF at St. John's, Newfoundland in 1942. I spent a leave in England with Sam Shnitka in 1944; it was he who persuaded me to go to University and I shall be forever grateful to him for that.

Litchinsky's Restaurant & Grocery Store (formally People's Confectionery, and later run by Abe and Joe Schechter), situated just across the street, was really an integral part of the Exchange. At lunch time the place was filled with shippers, bookers, and film inspectors (a.k.a. revisors), either eating home-made sandwiches or having a full meal, prepared by "Mama" (Nettie) Litchinsky, usually served by her daughter Esther, and sometimes by either eldest son Lazar, whose main occupation was managing the Plaza Theatre in Hillhurst, or youngest son Lou Litchinsky, the booker at MGM.

What did we all do at the Exchange? The system itself was the same for every company. First the salesman had to sell his company's film to the exhibitor. After the contracts were approved by the Manager, they were passed to the booker who arranged the play dates with the exhibitor.

Shippers would receive a daily "shipping sheet" early in the morning. The bookers would schedule distribution of films (which included feature pictures, one and two reelers, e.g., J.J. Fitzpatrick Travelogues, Pete Smith Specialties, Walter Lantz cartoons, newsreels and trailers), to the theatres by using a "Waghorn Guide", a railway publication that set out a detailed timetable for every city, town, village and hamlet on the CNR and CPR lines.

Frequently, last-minute connections, called "switches" had to be made. The shipper would be at the train depot (usually late at night), pick up the film from the baggage car, quickly check the reels inside, and drop the can or cans onto another train or rush them to the bus depot at the old Herald Building on the corner of 7th Avenue and Centre Street, for delivery to another out-of-town theatre.

Three things made this kind of booking very risky: (1) the film itself could not be inspected by a revisor to ensure it was not damaged, (2) the connection might be missed or (3) an uncensored print could be seized by

a provincial censor. Every film, whether a feature, short subject or trailer, had to be "passed" by a Provincial Censor, whose official stamp would then be imprinted on the film. It was the shipper's responsibility to ensure that the print had been censored for the province where it was to be shown. Any one of these slipups could mean a "dark house", the most dreaded event that could befall a booker or shipper; it usually meant instant dismissal.

There were many switches that were "near-misses" during my time, and one became legendary. A switch was to be made at the CPR at 11:00 p.m. by a shipper, who that night had driven to Bowness Park with a girl friend. Parked in the moonlight, and with his mind obviously elsewhere, at around 10:15 he was startled by the sound of a steam engine's whistle, which reminded him of his switch. The rest is history—he made it!

On one occasion I shipped an uncensored print of *When The Daltons Rode* to Kindersley, Saskatchewan. The Censor seized it and closed the theatre. To this day I remember my shock upon learning of the mistake and the sympathy I got from Ollie Rowe, our revisor. Because it was wartime and help was hard to find, I kept my job.

All films were kept in their own fire-proof metal containers in a fire-proof vault and always inspected (rewound, cleaned, and repaired, with tears and breaks trimmed and spliced) before being placed in the vault to await the next booking. The hexagonal metal containers, particularly the eight- and ten-reelers, were very heavy, but with the exception of Ben Shnitka, we were all young and never thought about back problems or hernias.

Every day we shippers who had one- and two-reelers on the "sheet" would prepare a list of the destinations and go from office to office, to determine who was shipping a feature film and whether his smaller reel(s) could be fitted into someone

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else's can, thereby saving the cost of a separate shipment. This was an event for conviviality, which I always enjoyed.

My favorite stops were at Columbia or RKO, where Sid Pearlman and Bert Pegarraro, a genial Italian, would always be ready with smiles, practical jokes and advice for "the kid." Costs could also be reduced by combining feature shipments for "double bills" but this meant having to haul the heavy cans to another office for the joint shipment. Despite my affection for Pearlman and Pegarraro, I was never too pleased when we shared a double bill because both Columbia and RKO were located on the second floor of the building and I was generally the one who had to do the carrying!

Every shipper deferred, whenever possible, to Ben Shnitka by bringing the cans to him. I'll always remember MGM's *Gone With The Wind*, not for the movie, but because the film was a twelve-reeler and at the time, the longest movie (four hours) ever made. Ben had to cart the print around in two large size cans. He used a little wagon.

With two exceptions (Warners and MGM), we shippers were also our company's "ad sales manager"; many weeks prior to the receipt of new prints, all the posters and ad materials for the picture would be sent to us by the studio which we would ship to the exhibitor in time for him to advertise at least a week before the show.

A unique event occurred once a year and took a full week to organize—the joint shipment to Yellowknife. In those days before cargo planes, film was shipped to Yellowknife, NWT once a year, by rail and barge. This was an all-company co-operative effort; a bulk shipment of the oldest films sent off to Yellowknife in the late summer, along with whatever advertising material that was left, not to return until spring the following year.

On High Holidays, when many of the Jews did not come in to work, bookers like Jack Gow (Universal)

and Larry Strick (Columbia) and other non-Jewish colleagues willingly took over our shipping duties. At Christmas, every office had a tree, and the Exchange Christmas party at the Palliser that I attended in 1940 was one I shall never forget. At Purim, "Mama" Litchinsky baked hamantashen for all to enjoy, and at Pesach everybody who lunched at her restaurant ate matzos—no exceptions.

Many Southern Alberta theatre owners, known as "exhibitors", were Jewish. The Allen theatre chain, based in Calgary for many years, at one time owned sixty theatres across Canada, and had built both the Palace and the Strand on 8th Avenue. Those of us who grew up in the thirties remember "second runs" at the Strand, managed by Roy Chown, and "first runs" at the Palace, managed by Pete Egan. Both were great showmen, as were Alan Gold and Buddy Golden, owners of the Tivoli on 4th Street W., and the Kinema on 14th Street S.W. and Jack Barron, owner of the Grand on 1st Street S.W. (He also ran the Palace from 1923 to 1928.)

The Chaba in Jasper was owned by Max Garfin (his brother Joe was sales manager at Universal), and both the Rialto and the Garneau in Edmonton by two lawyers, Moe Lieberman and Harry Friedman.

"Screenings" were a much anticipated event. Exhibitors could see the new features fresh from the studio, and staff could invite family and friends to "their" movies in the Exchange's screening room. Most of the time we shippers and poster clerks invited one another to share the evening.

It is said that the '30s and '40s were the "golden era" of movies. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity of working in the distribution end of the industry, if only for a short time, during that period. I look back with pleasure on the good spirit and fellowship that prevailed amongst such a diverse group of people—a microcosm of what today we call the "multicultural society."

Thank you to our New Members, Patrons, Benefactors

Special thanks to the following persons, whose generous donations in recent months have placed them on our roster of patrons and benefactors:

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Selected New Books in the Harry B. Cohen Genealogical Library

Reviewed by David Bickman

The Source - A Guide Book of American Genealogy. Edited by Loretto Dennis Szucs and Sandra Hargreaves Luebking; Ancestry Incorporated, 1997, Salt Lake City, Utah.

This book is a standard reference in the field in genealogy and family history. It identifies and describes the rich body of original research material that is available for family history research.

Record types covered in the book include data bases, birth, death, and cemetery records, marriage and divorce records, census records, church records, court records, land and tax records, military records, business, employment and institutional records, municipal directories, newspapers, and records pertaining to immigration. There is a specific chapter dealing with "Tracking Jewish American Family History," written by Gary Mokotoff. There are also chapters that provide methods and techniques for tracking ancestors.

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Childhood on a Jewish Homestead – Memoirs of the Hackman Sisters

By Agi Romer-Segal

The second issue of *Discovery*, Fall, 1991 featured excerpts from Jack Hackman's memoirs "Twenty Years of Pioneering, 1906-1926," about his life as a homesteader at the Jewish farm colony near Rumsey, Alberta. Part of the handwritten memoir of the eldest daughter Anne Hackman Passavoy, describing town life, appeared in the Fall, 1996, *Discovery*.

Recently the youngest daughter of Lena and Jack Hackman, Miriam Bloomberg, was kind enough to send the JHSSA copies of additional material written by her and middle sister Rebecca (Revela) Weissner.

The recollections of the sisters—Anne, Miriam and Rebecca—about growing up in the 1920s on the Rumsey farm and in Calgary enrich the vivid picture painted in their father's memoirs.

All three daughters have clear memories of the farm. They lived in the wooden house Jack built after his marriage to Lena, a house which contained a partition in back for the grandparents.

The ice-house is prominent in both Anne and Rebecca's memoirs. Rebecca

recalls: "There was an ice-house which was used in the summer to store dairy products and vegetables. The floor was dug down and they cut large blocks of ice on the (Red Deer) river or the frozen sloughs and hauled the ice to the shed and put it down as a floor. They then covered the ice with straw."

All the girls mention the horses—with special mention of Jenny, occasionally used to get Annie to school. Rebecca laments, "We didn't get to ride very often because our mother was afraid of animals, even dogs." Indeed, in a taped interview, Lena laughingly admits that she never touched a horse or milked a cow—she left that for her mother-in-law.

The horse was replaced by a Dodge, "one of the first cars in Alberta," Miriam proudly remembers. The Dodge figures prominently in all the Hackman memoirs. "It had a roof and the roads were terrible. As you bounced along you would bounce up and hit the wooden parts that went across the roof, and you had to hang on because you had nothing but roads that were rutted.

"The roads would get washed out or flooded, or full of water and then

would dry. It was very rough. But we were very lucky because we had a car."

The greatest advantage of owning a car was the visits it afforded to the scattered Jewish farm families in the area. "On Sundays," Miriam recalls, ... "we went visiting. We visited our cousins, the Jacobsons, in Rowley. We also visited some friends in Big Valley. ... They were the Belkins."

Miriam remembers trips "when we would go to Calgary and we would have big family reunions."

Family was of utmost importance to the isolated homesteaders. All three girls share the same memories of their paternal grandmother: "My Bubba wore long skirts and blouses and a ficholka (sic) scarf on her head all the time. I don't remember ever seeing her without her head covered with a scarf.

"Zaida always had a long beard and always had his head covered." (Anne) The grandfather, Abraham Hackman, looked after the vegetable garden, but as an observant Jew would do no yard work on the Sabbath.

Many of Anne's memories include food and the holidays. She remembers the home-made ice cream on the farm, and the "real" ice cream in Calgary. She describes the lengthy process of making cottage cheese, which was shaped like a heart and eaten with "mamalegen", corn meal, or with "lockshen", home-made noodles. She also mentions her grandparents' dilled pickles, dilled green tomatoes, and koshered "pickled fleish"—corned beef—and pickled tongue.

School days are well-remembered. Jack Hackman had donated land to build the one-room Thompson School. He served as a trustee and even went to a school convention. The older daughter remembers some prejudice at the school, where they were the only Jews. They recall being dunked in water and having their lunch taken away on occasion.

Miriam started school in Rumsey after the Hackmans had left the farm to a grocery store in town. "By the time I started kindergarten I could read. The teacher put a big boy next to me. It was a one-room school with all the grades in it. She said for me to help him read."

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Lena Hackman, with daughters Anne, Rebecca and Miriam, Rumsey, 1928. Source - Miriam Hackman Bloomberg

Yukon Gold Rush Jews Settle in Calgary

By Jack Switzer

The 1901 Dominion census showed 252 Jews in the Yukon, compared to 242 in Alberta. They were part of the Klondike gold rush, which began in 1896.

The Jews of the Yukon Territory are celebrating the centennial of Jewish life in the area, by restoring and re-dedicating the small Bet Chaim cemetery at Dawson City, then called just Dawson.

The Klondike gold rush saw over 200 Jews moving to Dawson and its gold mining claims. Others briefly settled at the Alaskan port of Skagway or at Whitehorse, where a handful of Jewish families still live.

Forty thousand gold-seekers and their suppliers had entered the Yukon by 1900. Dawson was then the largest Canadian city west of Winnipeg and north of Vancouver. Today the area

houses only a few hundred persons, and today's mining output is less than one-tenth the one million ounces of gold extracted in 1900.

In 1902 the Jewish Society of Dawson acquired a lot in "Cemetery Ridge," overlooking the city, and Rabbi Robert Bloom dedicated the Bet Chaim Cemetery. The site, with at least seven graves, has been unused for decades. Only the Hebrew lettering on an arched gateway and one grave marker—that of Solomon Packer, of Odessa—are legible.

The Yukon's Jewish community is seeking funds to assist in the Klondike Gold Rush cemetery restoration, and invites



Street scene, Dawson, 1899. The dog team is pulling a cart. Source - Glenbow Archives, NA 4412-22.

everyone to the historic site's re-dedication on the weekend of July 31, 1998. The event is part of the summer-long centennial celebration for Dawson City.

The group is also anxious to trace the history of the Gold Rush Jews and their families. One Klondike pioneer, Louis Brier, left part of his fortune to the Jewish community of Vancouver.

At least one Calgary Jewish family, the Barrons, has roots in the Dawson City gold rush. Joseph S. Barron, born in Russia, married to Elizabeth Bell Barron, and an 1882 immigrant to Winnipeg, entered the Yukon with his family via Skagway in 1898.

Mr. Barron hiked the Chilkoot Trail from Skagway to Whitehorse, and took a river boat upstream to Dawson City. His family joined him in 1903, using the Yukon and White Pass railway for the trip. Joseph Barron operated a clothing store in Dawson City and held gold mining claims in the area.

His two sons, Jacob Bell Barron, born in 1888, and Abraham Lee Barron, born in 1889, both attended school in Dawson City. Jacob, better known as J.B. Barron, was the first graduate of the Dawson High School in 1905. J.B. attended the University of Chicago, and began practicing law in Calgary in 1911. His practice was later joined by his brother, A.L. Barron. J.B. Barron later became prominent in the movie theatre business.

Joseph and Elizabeth Barron stayed in Dawson City until 1916, when they moved to Calgary to join their sons. Mr. Barron died in 1917, his wife Elizabeth lived until 1939. Both are buried in the "old" Calgary Jewish Cemetery.

J.B. Barron died in Calgary in 1965, A.L. Barron in 1966. Both had come a long way from Dawson City.

Childhood on a Jewish Homestead

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There were many hardships recalled, especially on the farm. Both Anne and Miriam write about being quarantined for scarlet fever. "I became sick and we went to the local doctor, who was drunk. ... The doctor found a vacant house and he said we had to stay there for a week. ... At night when we felt it was safe, we would go out and take a walk." (Miriam)

Rebecca also had an encounter with frontier hygiene: "Every year a clinic group came to town to remove tonsils of all the children who needed it. My friend and I sneaked into the school where they were operating 'en masse.' We saw buckets of bloody refuse and we left there in a hurry."

Alberta winters left a lasting impression on the Hackman sisters. Miriam has fond memories, even of winters she labeled as "severe." "We'd make angels in the snow. We'd build snowmen. We'd have snow fights. We would just tromp around ... and dress very warmly with mittens and warm underwear, and hats and layers of clothes."

Disastrous weather for farmers—drought, hail and a cyclone, are

recounted by Anne.

Their fondest memories are of special outings for picnics. "We would go up to a lake and we would spend time picnicking and we would go swimming." ... "My father had a camera, an old Brownie camera. He loved to take pictures. We have pictures of that era. I would become very angry at him because he would write across the picture under each person, who it was. We're glad now he did that." (Miriam)

There is also mention of picnics by the Red Deer River. Rebecca remembers their 1925 trip to Buffalo Lake. "I got sunburned and was miserable for several days afterwards."

The Hackman family eventually left Alberta after their grocery store in Rumsey burnt down.

The Hackman sisters' fond memories of their childhood reinforce Jack Hackman's message of pride in his pioneering efforts to build a better life for his family.

(Jack and Lena Hackman also had two sons, Sam and Sol. Sam Hackman joined the Canadian army, and was killed in action in France in 1916.)

New Photos from Our Archives



David and Hymie Davids, Lethbridge, c. 1921. (*Hymie Davids*)



Max and Rachel Kurtzberg and children: Claire (Davis), Ben, Minnie (Loomer), Bryna, and Yetta (Hyatt) at their Rumsey homestead, 1920. The Kurtzbergs came to Calgary from Montreal in 1910; Max worked at the Great West Saddlery, then ran his own saddlery and later a second-hand store on 8th Avenue East. After farming in Rumsey, the family moved to Camrose in 1932. (Photo – Vera Himelfarb; Data – Murt Davis, Vancouver)



Curley Gurevitch milking a cow, Rumsey, c. 1935. (*JHSSA*)

The Avrum Spector family, in Russia, 1901, prior to their immigration to Canada. Parents Avrum Fishel (Philip Arthur) and Golda Pauchas Spector (seated) are flanked by son Shlomo Zalman Spector and daughter Toba Spector (Fishstrom). Shlomo Zalman Spector homesteaded at the Jewish farm colony at Hirsch, Sask., where he married Sarah Klingman. They moved to Calgary where Shlomo was a kosher butcher and was for many years "Shamas" of the House of Jacob synagogue. (*Goldie Moskovich – daughter*)



Book Reviews

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Source Book for Jewish Genealogies and Family Histories, by David S. Zubatsky and Irwin M. Berent; Avotaynu, Inc., Teaneck, New Jersey, 1996.

This is a comprehensive bibliography of published and unpublished Jewish genealogies, family histories and individual family names compiled from books, newspaper and journal articles, Jewish encyclopedia entries, family papers and family trees. Included are all collections of Jewish family papers from the United States Archives and Libraries and other countries, such as Australia, Netherlands, England, Germany and Israel. More than twenty-two sources of some twelve thousand family names are given. The book should assist genealogists and family historians in determining primary sources on Jewish families in a variety of times, places and backgrounds.

Lithuanian Jewish Communities, by Nancy Schoenburg and Stuart Schoenburg; Jason Aronson Inc., Northvale, New Jersey, 1996.

This is a resource for students of Lithuanian Jewish history and for descendants of Lithuanian Jews. The book includes data on major Jewish communities that existed in Lithuania before World War II; location, history, populations, streets, shops and synagogues, and the names of Jewish citizens.

Appendices provide member lists from Lithuanian Jewish organizations throughout the world, and list agencies that will provide help in further research on Lithuanian Jewry. The book will greatly help descendants of Lithuanian Jews who wish to trace their genealogy.

A History of Ukraine, by Paul Robert Magocsi; The University of Toronto Press, 1996.

This book traces in detail the evolution of the Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, giving considerable treatment also to the other peoples and cultures that developed within the borders of the Ukraine, including the Jews, who are viewed in the book as having formed an essential part of Ukrainian history. It covers the period of time commencing in the first millennium up to and including the declaration of Ukrainian independence in 1991. Of particular interest to Jewish readers are the chapters that deal with Khmelnytsky and the revolution of 1648, the partition of Poland, and all of the chapters dealing with the Ukraine as part of the Russian Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is a worthwhile resource for any members of our community who trace their roots to those lands presently forming part of Ukraine.

Jewish Cemetery Tour Set for June 28th

By Harry Sanders, JHSSA Archivist

On June 28th at 3:00 p.m., the JHSSA will offer an historical tour of the oldest manifestation of Jewish life in Calgary—the Chevra Kadisha cemetery in Erlton (30 Avenue and Macleod Trail S.W.).

Established in 1904, the cemetery predates all other Jewish institutions in the city. The community's first permanent Jewish settlers, Rachel and Jacob Diamond, arrived in 1889. Over the next 15 years the few Jews who died in Calgary were buried in Winnipeg.

But when 10-month old Goldie Bell died on September 3, 1904, her father Nathan Bell, along with Jacob Diamond, persuaded the City to sell a small portion of Cemetery Hill for use as a "Hebrew burying ground." The "Hebrew Community" paid \$160 for a site 26 feet wide and 93.1 feet long. The Jewish burial ground was established west of the Protestant graveyard, Union Cemetery.

Both lay south of the city limits until 1907, when the Erlton district was annexed. Between the two cemeteries, on a north-south orientation, stretched what was then called Victoria Road—now Macleod Trail. Over time the Jewish cemetery has expanded to its present size, about 3.5 acres.

The Chevra Kadisha (literally, Holy Society) was first organized in 1907 under the aegis of the newly-formed Congregation House of Jacob. Charles Malkin, a grocer who came to Calgary in 1906, was a member of the cemetery committee and became first President of the Chevra Kadisha when it was formally incorporated on December 4, 1914.

Malkin was succeeded by Elijah Gefen and J. Wolfe, but returned to serve as president from 1922 to 1945. Later presidents included David Abraham Dvorkin, William Polsky, Harry Goresht, Eddie Cohen, and Percy Fishman. Julius (Ziggy) Bleviss was Chevra Kadisha president from 1974 to 1994, followed by the current president, Bill Aizenman. Labie Doctor became the organization's first Executive Director in 1994.

Women's involvement in the Chevra

Kadisha began early; the mother of founding president Charles Malkin felt strongly about proper Jewish burial rites, and became personally involved in the Chevra's work. A Ladies' Auxiliary was formed, and its presidents have included Rose Dvorkin, Lily Horodezky, and currently Lillian Zuide-ma. All burial shrouds are sewn by the ladies' group.

Chevra Kadisha funerals were first held at private homes, then at the McInnes and Holloway funeral home (then on 4th Street and 14th Avenue West), until the present Jewish Funeral Chapel at 1703 - 17 Avenue S.W. was built in 1961.

The Chevra Kadisha assumed responsibility for Jewish burials at the city-owned Queen's Park cemetery in 1943, and for burials at the Beth Israel (now Beth Tzedek) cemetery (in Midnapore) in 1976.

Before the Chevra Kadisha was incorporated in 1914, the City of Calgary maintained Jewish burial records; these can be found in the City of Calgary Archives. The Chevra keeps complete burial records and can provide information such as date of death and plot locations, on request.

The JHSSA archives include several Chevra Kadisha documents, including membership records (1910-11) and copies of handwritten records and minutes (in Yiddish, some translated into English, 1912-14 and 1948-59.) The JHSSA has photographed and transcribed all the tombstones in the old cemetery.

Highlights of the JHSSA's tour of the old cemetery (to be led by Harry Sanders) will include the graves of significant figures from southern Alberta's Jewish community, the Jewish War Memorial, the Infants' Memorial, and the Genizah, where outworn religious books and articles are interred.

Contact the Jewish Historical Society office (253-8600, local 209) or Harry Sanders (259-8339) for details of the June 28th tour. All are welcome. A reception at the Ben Gallay room, adjacent to the cemetery, will follow the tour.

JHSSA News

Discovery Sponsored by B'Nai Brith

Printing and distribution of this issue of Discovery is sponsored by B'Nai Brith Calgary Lodge No. 816. Formed in 1917, the Calgary B'Nai Brith Lodge is one of the city's oldest and most vital Jewish organizations. Thank you to Calgary lodge president Rudy Berger and all B.B. members for their support of our Jewish history work.

Previous Discovery sponsors include Reata and Mel Polsky and Dave and Ruth Waterman; and We Can Copy.

Please consider sponsorship of a Discovery issue as your family or group's way of supporting the important task of preserving, recording, and communicating our Jewish community's vibrant history. Please

call Jay Joffe at 228-3330 for more information.

Book of Heritage

A Book of Heritage certificate has been presented to "our dear aunt" Francis Bondaroff, formerly of Calgary and now of Montreal, in honor of her 75th birthday, by Linda and John Barron and their children.

Any important occasion can be honored in the Book of Heritage. An individualized certificate is presented to the recipient, and a copy is displayed in the JHSSA exhibit case at the Calgary Jewish Centre.

Minimum donation (tax deductible) for a Book of Heritage certificate is \$100. Smaller donations can be directed towards books for our Harry B. Cohen Genealogical Library, or by having the JHSSA send a historical photo card to the recipient.

Please call Tiby Presma at 281-3910 for information on the Book of Heritage, library gifts, photo cards, and other sponsorship opportunities.

Land of Promise

Over 800 copies of Land of Promise, our photographic history of Jews in Southern Alberta, have been sold. Only 1000 were printed, and it will not be re-issued. Copies can be purchased at the front desk of the Calgary Jewish Centre, or by mail from the JHSSA. Each book is \$50, plus \$5 for mail orders.

Also available is the Discovery Collection, a binder of 20 Discovery issues, from 1990 to 1998. The cost is \$25 per copy.

What They're Saying About Land of Promise

Ben Rose, The Canadian Jewish News, Toronto: "An amazing compilation of photographs ..." "In a painstaking editing, volunteers have supplied names to all the people in the photographs so it becomes a veritable treasure trove."

Ben Kayfetz, The Jewish Standard, Toronto: "a hearty yasher koach (may your strength increase)." "... a remarkable work" ... "this reviewer, with no family link to the west, ... has found interest in every page."

Janice Rosen, Archives Director, Canadian Jewish Congress, Montreal: "To say that I am impressed with this book is the most pale of understatement. The quality of the information presented, the family history summaries, the illustrations and the manner in which the book is laid out make this both a fascinating read and an invaluable reference document."

Eugene Orenstein, Jewish Studies, McGill University, Montreal: "This is a beautifully produced pictorial work which will enrich Canadian Jewish historiography."

Wendy McGee, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton: "It's a lovely book and very readable. Congratulations on a job well done."

Jewish Genealogy Society Plans Full Program

The Jewish Genealogical Society is now a reality, meeting regularly, involving its members in various stages of individual family history, and beginning to serve as a resource, by mail and the internet, for persons all over the world seeking information on their Jewish ancestors who lived here.

The April 20th meeting introduced members to local Jewish resources. David Bickman described the many books available in the JHSSA's Harry B. Cohen Genealogical Library, and also noted the senior group's extensive archives. Labie Doctor, Director of the Calgary Cheva Kadisha, discussed the availability of data in his organization's files. Members received basic "how-to" genealogy kits.

Officers for the JGSA were chosen. They include Florence Elman, president, and David Bickman, JHSSA Liaison.

For more information on the Jewish Genealogical Society (affiliated with the JHSSA) please call Florence Elman at 850-4337, or e-mail her: <haflo@cadvision.com>.

— By Florence Elman

DISCOVERY

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The Editors welcome submissions for publication relating to areas of Calgary and Southern Alberta Jewish History. All articles should be typed, documented and sent for consideration.

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